

FILING AN INFORMAL COMPLAINT WITH THE FCC IS EASY

If you have a problem with a telephone company or other company providing telephone-related services including wireless communications, you should first try to resolve your complaint directly with the company providing the service or the company billing you for the service. If you are unsuccessful in your attempts to resolve the complaint yourself, then you should file a complaint with the proper regulatory agency.

Where to File Your Complaint

Complaints about wireline services provided within a state (intrastate service) should be sent to the state regulatory authority. These complaints might include rates for your local telephone service and charges for toll calls placed from one location in a state to another location within the same state. You should contact your local or state consumer office to obtain the telephone number and address for your state regulatory authority. This information may be listed in the government section of your telephone directory.

Complaints regarding telephone related-services provided from one state to another (interstate service) and international calls should be filed with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). All wireless complaints, interstate or intrastate, should be filed with the FCC.

There are two types of complaints – informal and formal. As explained below, the informal complaint process is generally the preferred method for most consumer complaints.

Filing an Informal Complaint with the FCC is Easy!

The FCC established the informal complaint process to make it easy for consumers to file complaints about telephone-related and wireless services and for carriers to act promptly to address issues or problems that impact individual consumers. You will usually get a response from a carrier within 45 days. The FCC reviews that response to be certain the carrier has addressed your concerns.

The informal complaint process has several advantages over other “formal” FCC proceedings. It is fast, requires no complicated legal procedures, and does not require the complaining party to appear before the FCC. Consumers should know that the FCC takes each complaint seriously, even if it is called informal.

There is no charge to file an informal complaint with the FCC. You may file electronically using the FCC Form 475 (complaint form) at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints.html>. You may also file your complaint in other ways:

E-Mail: E-mail your complaint to fccinfo@fcc.gov.

Mail: Send your written complaint to:
Federal Communications Commission



Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Fax: Fax your complaint to 1-866-418-0232.

Phone: Call us with your complaint at the following numbers:
Toll Free: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice
1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY
Consumer and Mediation Specialists are available Monday - Friday,
8 am – 5:30 pm ET.

What to Include in Your Informal Complaint

Your **informal** complaint should include the following information:

- your name, address and the telephone number or numbers involved with your complaint;
- a telephone number where you can be reached during the business day;
- specific information about your complaint that describes the dispute in detail, including the names of **all** companies involved;
- names and telephone numbers of any company representatives that you contacted, the dates you spoke with these representatives and any other information that would help process your complaint;
- a **copy** of any bill(s) which relate to the dispute; and,
- the type of resolution you are seeking, such as a credit or refund.

The Informal Complaint Process

Although there are exceptions, the informal complaint process generally works as follows:

- after receiving your informal complaint, FCC staff will analyze your complaint and generally forward it to the service provider and direct the company to respond to the FCC within 30 days;
- the FCC also directs the company to send a copy of its response to you;
- if your informal complaint involves an interstate or international telephone matter or wireless service and you are dissatisfied with the company's response to your informal complaint, the FCC's rules give you the right to file a "formal" complaint **within** six months from the date the carrier responded to your informal complaint.



Filing a Formal Complaint with the FCC

Consumers seeking to litigate formal complaints against telephone companies or other companies providing telephone-related services must comply with the Commission's procedural and evidentiary rules when filing a formal complaint and pay a filing fee per complaint. As of September 10, 2002, the formal complaint filing fee was \$170.00. For current fee information refer to Rule 1.1105, 47 C.F.R. § 1.1105 or contact the FCC toll-free at 1-888-225-5322.

Formal complaint proceedings are very similar to federal court proceedings because each party must comply with specific procedural rules, appear before the FCC, file legal documents, and often address legal issues, usually in the form of legal briefs. For these reasons, formal complaints are usually filed by lawyers and most often by those with expertise in the telecommunications field and the unique procedural rules of the Commission.

Complete information on how to file formal complaints can be found in Sections 1.720 through 1.735 of the FCC's rules located at 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.720 – 1.735. You can also contact the FCC's Enforcement Bureau at www.fcc.gov/eb/tcd/complaints.html for information on filing a formal complaint.

For information on how to file other types of complaints (besides telephone-related complaints), please call the FCC's Consumer Center toll-free at 1-888-225-5322 (TTY: 1-888-835-5322).

For information on other telecommunications issues, contact the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at www.fcc.gov/cgb.

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For this or any other consumer publication in an alternative format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print, or audio) please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an e-mail to FCC504@fcc.gov.

To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, click on www.fcc.gov/cgb/emailservic.html.

This fact sheet is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceeding or cases involving this subject or related issues.

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